2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco
Toba SI2
Choroti SK6

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shape of a horse [1] — an animal which is regarded with superstition by the Choroti — and will kill the »good spirit» of the inimical sorcerer. The latter being thus deprived of his assistant genius, will fall an easy victim to his assailant.

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The guardian spirit is not hereditary but is acquired individually in the course of life and to a certain degree through teaching. The older a person grows, the more power and influence he is believed, by the Tobas, to gain over his *peyák nõtta*; hence the medicine-men are generally men of advanced age. The same may be said of the *Choroti*, who regard every old man as being more or less a sorcerer and endowed with supernatural powers. Since the women are always physically and spiritually weaker than men, they have always more difficulty in obtaining guardian spirits. I only know of a special initiation for women, who dedicate themselves to the exercise of the magic art, in the case of the Choroti. A women who wants to become a sorcerer, I was told, must eat a raw chirimoya fruit (*Anona chirimolia?*). When ripe, the chirimoya is edible and good; but in an unripe condition it is said to be poisonous, and a person eating of it according to the belief of the Indians will die or fall ill. If however the woman, while she is eating the raw fruit, performs the ceremony *Kausimá* with the magical rattle staffs, she will escape harm, and she will moreover in the future be able to conjure spirits with success. This idea is in fact typical of the initiation ceremonies of the Indians: the woman has been in contact with evil spirits but has been able to resist them, in consequence she has been rendered immune against them and acquired power over them which enables her to use them for her own ends in the future.

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Apart from the fact that the »good spirit» of the Choroti medicine-men is at least in some cases believed to appear in the form of a horse, the »good spirits» are in their external appearance like other spirits. The *Tobas* say that their *peyák nõtta* dwells in the heavens (*piyim*) from where he comes down to assist the medicine-man who invokes him. Similarly the Choroti say that their *mõhsek eis*, when summond by the sorcerer comes down from the sky, but the »sky» (*põle*) is not to the Choroti a definite place like the *piyim* of the Tobas. *Piyim* has developed into a mythological concept: it signifies Paradise or the realm of the dead of the Toba Indians. When a Toba Indian dies, I was told,

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[1] Since the horse was introduced among the Chaco Indians by Europeans, this is not of course an original idea of the Choroti.